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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/54/595)*]

54/122. A United Nations literacy decade: education for all

The General Assembly,

Recalling that in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[2] and the Convention on the Rights of the Child[3] the right of every individual to education is recognized as inalienable,

Recalling also its resolutions 42/104 of 7 December 1987, by which it proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year, 44/127 of 15 December 1989, 46/93 of 16 December 1991, 50/143 of 21 December 1995, in which it called for continuing international efforts to promote literacy, and 52/84 of 12 December 1997, in which it requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and in consultation with Member States, to consider effective ways and means for achieving the goal of education for all, including the desirability and feasibility of launching a United Nations decade to eradicate illiteracy,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that nearly two thirds of the world's adult illiterates are women,

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] Resolution 44/25, annex.

Convinced that literacy, especially functional literacy, and quality education represent a lifelong necessity for all and serve as an investment in human and social capital and a major tool for the empowerment of people,

Recalling its resolution 53/153 of 9 December 1998, entitled "United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995–2004, and public information activities in the field of human rights",

Confident that the International Literacy Year and the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, resulted in increased awareness and support for literacy efforts and became a turning point in the struggle for a literate world,

Underlining the importance of sustaining and further promoting the progress achieved since the International Literacy Year and the Jomtien Conference,

Welcoming the Amman Affirmation, adopted at the mid-decade meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, held at Amman from 16 to 19 June 1996,[4] the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization[5] and the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, adopted at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, held at Hamburg, Germany, from 14 to 18 July 1997,[6]

Recognizing that, despite the significant progress in basic education, especially the increase in primary school enrolment coupled with a growing emphasis on the quality of education, major problems, both emerging and continuing, still persist which require even more forceful and concerted action at the national and international levels so as to achieve the goal of education for all,

Urging Member States, in close partnership with international organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to promote the right to education for all and to create conditions for all for learning throughout life,

1. *Takes note* of the interim report of the Secretary-General and of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, entitled "Progress towards the goal of education for all: the year 2000 Assessment";[7]

2. *Reaffirms* that basic education for all is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy;

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[4] A/52/183–E/1997/74, annex.

[5] *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Paris, UNESCO, 1996).

[6] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, document ED/MD/101, part III.

[7] A/54/128–E/1999/70.

3. *Acknowledges* the efforts and the preparatory work at the national and regional levels for the year 2000 assessment of progress towards achieving the goals of education for all in identifying both continuing and emerging challenges, and stresses the need to meet those challenges and to accelerate the efforts to meet the basic needs of people of all age groups, in particular girls and women;

4. *Appeals* to all Governments to intensify their efforts to eradicate illiteracy and to direct education towards the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

5. *Also appeals* to all Governments to redouble their efforts to achieve their own goals of education for all by setting firm targets and timetables, where possible, including gender-specific education targets and programmes to combat the illiteracy of women and girls, and, by working in active partnership with communities, associations, the media and development agencies, to reach those targets;

6. *Appeals anew* to Governments and to economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend greater financial and material support to the efforts to increase literacy and achieve the goals of education for all, through, *inter alia*, the 20/20 initiative, as appropriate;

7. *Invites* Member States, the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to intensify further their efforts to implement effectively the World Declaration on Education for All,[8] the Amman Affirmation,[4] the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, adopted at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education,[6] and the Agenda for the Future, also adopted at the Fifth International Conference,[6] and the relevant commitments and recommendations to promote literacy made in recent major United Nations conferences and at their five-year reviews with a view to better coordinating their activities and increasing their contribution to development;

8. *Welcomes* the convening of the World Education Forum, to be held in April 2000 in Senegal with a view to assessing the implementation of the goals of education for all and adopting an agenda for education in the twenty-first century;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Member States and with other relevant organizations and bodies, to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a proposal for a United Nations literacy decade, with a draft plan of action and possible time-frame for such a decade, on the basis of the outcomes of the World Education Forum and the special session of the General Assembly for the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development;

10. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States as well as the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

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[8] *Final Report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5–9 March 1990*, Inter-Agency Commission (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) for the World Conference on Education for All, New York, 1990, appendix I.

11. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session the question of a United Nations literacy decade.

83rd plenary meeting
17 December 1999